

CC Docket NO. 90-571 and ORIGINAL
CC Docket NO. 98-67

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May 15, 2001

Ms. Magalie Salas
Office of the Secretary of the FCC
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: "EX PARTE COMMENT FOR DOCKET NUMBER 90-571 on NECA
FUNDS" and "EX PARTE COMMENT TO DOCKET NUMBER 98-67 ON
TRS/STS OUTREACH"

Dear Ms Salas:

PROVIDING SPEECH TO SPEECH OUTREACH

I live in Alabama and I urge the Alabama Public Service Commission to make telephones accessible to more people with speech disabilities by establishing an effective outreach service for Speech to Speech..

SUCCESS STORIES

In California, people with speech disabilities have dramatically improved their lives because they learned of STS through California's effective outreach service. One example is Dr. Robert Aber who experienced great growth in his psychology practice once he was able to communicate with clients over STS. Writer Pam Hoyer advanced her writing career substantially using STS to gather facts for articles. Dr Bob Segalman became successful as a social activist helping people with speech disabilities once he began using STS. STS potentially answers the telecommunications needs of thousands of people.

THE NEED FOR STS OUTREACH

In addition to providing STS itself, providing outreach appropriate to people with speech disabilities

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is an essential part of access. When people with speech disabilities have appropriate training to use STS, they become more independent, participate more in the community, get jobs etc. The new relay regulations require states and relay providers to contract such that relay is accessible to users with speech disabilities.

If the Alabama Public Service Commission provides STS without appropriate outreach, call volumes will be extremely low. Call volumes could rise substantially with an extensive STS outreach service tailored to people with speech disabilities. Failure to provide appropriate outreach for STS prevents many Alabama residents with speech disabilities from entering the mainstream of life.

Because I want this independence for people with speech disabilities in Alabama, I strongly urge the Alabama Public Service Commission to provide an STS outreach service similar to the very successful STS intensive outreach services in California, Minnesota and Maryland.

FUNDING STS OUTREACH

Based on Minnesota's budgetary experience, such a service may cost \$109,000 annually in Alabama given its population.. Many states have sufficient surcharge money to fund a STS outreach service without difficulty. Vocational rehabilitation client services money may be available to teach people to use STS as it fosters independence and makes people job ready.

CONCLUSION

A large proportion of people with speech disabilities have other disabilities as well; this makes it very difficult for them to advocate for themselves. Therefore, it is necessary for the rest of us to insure that services like STS outreach are adequately provided for.

Again, I strongly urge the Alabama Public Service Commission to budget for an effective STS outreach service with a budget of about \$109,000.

Sincerely,



Charles H. Moses, III

cc: Disability Rights Office ✓
Consumer Information Bureau
Federal Communications Commission, Room 6C-447
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Judy G. McLean, Director, Advisory staff
Alabama Public Service Commission

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